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*Editorial*

## Oppose and thwart the repression of the legal democratic movement

**P**res. Gloria Arroyo's order to suppress supposed "legal front organizations of the Communist Party" is a Marcosian measure. And just like Marcos' imposition of martial law in 1972, this order will not only fail to prevent the continuous advance of the revolutionary movement. It will further push the Filipino people to support and join the New People's

Army (NPA) and participate in the armed revolutionary movement.

This order is a desperate measure in the face of the successive victorious and resounding tactical offensives of the NPA. Because of its failure to stem the advance of the armed revolution despite its "all-out counter-terrorist war," the Arroyo regime is now further turning the legal patriotic and democratic organizations into scapegoats and maliciously putting them on the same plane as the CPP and the NPA in order to justify the use of state violence against them.

As with previous regimes, militarism and fascist terrorism are the Arroyo regime's responses—done at the prodding of its US imperialist master—to the widening and growing opposition of the masses who suffer great hardship because of the crisis of the reactionary ruling system. The broad masses' intense discontent and restlessness are due to the rapid decline of the economy and their livelihood, the ruling classes' inability to address even the most basic needs of the greater number of people and the intensified oppression and suppression of the people.



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US imperialism and the local reactionary classes have not only failed to resolve the very deep economic and political crisis of the rotten semicolonial and semifeudal system. They have exacerbated the crisis in the last decade as successive regimes foolishly condemned the country to suffer the relentless onslaught of imperialist globalization and neoliberal policies being imposed by US imperialism through the IMF-WB. This has resulted in the regime's further isolation and in intensified infighting among the ranks of the reactionaries.

Even after the downfall of the Marcos regime, the fascist military bureaucratic machinery has remained at the center of power of any reactionary clique, and so have the repressive laws and decrees of the dictatorship against the democratic and progressive actions and struggles of the masses of the people.

The Arroyo regime has been relentlessly attacking the legal and democratic movement. The brutal murder of leaders and activists opposing and fighting large-scale

militarization and the fascist terrorism of the reactionary state in the countryside and cities is widespread. Striking examples are the attack on the leaders of CAGUIMUNGAN in Baggao, Cagayan (see *related news on page 3*) and the murder of activists Eden Marcellana and Eddie Gumanoy in Southern Tagalog in April.

There has been intense fascist intimidation and harassment and attacks on legal organizations of peasants, workers, youth, women and other organizations fighting for the democratic interests and rights of the most oppressed and exploited sectors of society.

The repression of workers' strikes and the busting of their unions and associations are widespread. Lately, both foreign monopoly and big comprador capitalists have been asking the government to implement a 10-year moratorium on changes to Collective Bargaining Agreements and, together with this, a ban on strikes.


In the face of all this, it is of vital importance to continue perse-

vering in expanding and strengthening the legal democratic movement. It is necessary to further broaden and intensify protests and mass struggles to oppose fascist terrorism and continue to defend and assert the people's political and economic rights. It is necessary to militantly take a stand and not be fazed by the fascist terror being inflicted on the people and the democratic and progressive forces.

These fascist schemes and attacks will fail if the people and the movement persevere in opposing them, continuously win over the broadest ranks of the people and the alliance of forces opposed to them, and employ a combination of various means of organization and resistance. Simultaneously, we must likewise expand and deepen the revolutionary underground movement so that we could persevere in and remain effective in waging resistance even if the local reactionary ruling classes resort to the worst of measures—open fascist terrorist repression.

In the face of intensifying fascist terrorism, the further invigoration of the people's army and the thorough advance of the revolutionary armed struggle are even more crucial to the all-sided advance of people's struggles. It is necessary to continue intensifying the tactical offensives of the NPA based on the capacity of the people's army and the mass base. We must do our utmost to further expand and strengthen guerrilla fronts in all strategic parts of the archipelago.

Let us make the imperialists and reactionaries pay dearly for relentlessly exacerbating their extortion of the masses of the people and imposing fascist violence on them. AB

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# Violence and fraud in the Isabela elections

**T**he filth and violence of local politics in Isabela reflect those of reactionary politics at the national level. Even now, we can already foresee the fate of the coming national polls.

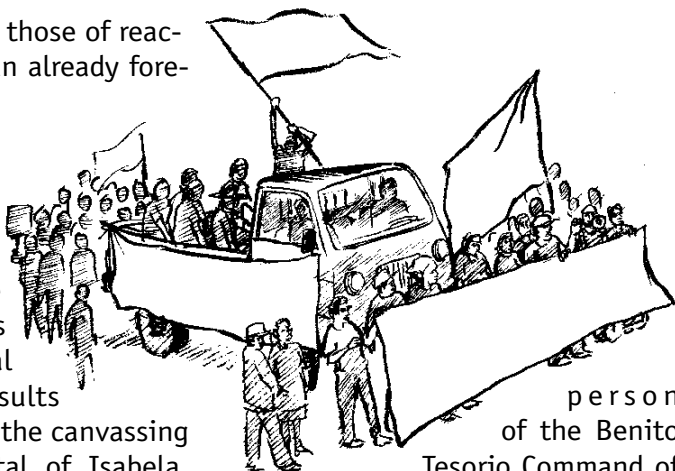
On May 12, the Dy dynasty in Isabela brazenly committed fraud in the special elections held to select the replacement of fourth district congressman Antonio Abaya, who passed away. The Dys and Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) favored their minion and Cojuangco relative Giorgidi Aggabao and ganged up on Dr. Asuncion Abaya, the late congressman's widow.

Isabela is one of Cojuangco's main strongholds. Cojuangco and Dy have been in close collusion in this province to protect their political and economic power. Through Aggabao's victory, they expect to continue their antipeople projects, principally the large-scale seizure of lands for cassava plantations, which of late has encompassed the fourth district of Isabela. They also need to maintain the area as a solid base for their election schemes in 2004.

Despite the Cojuangco-Dy-Aggabao cabal's employment of mas-

sive repression and violence, bribery and vote-buying, Abaya clearly defeated Aggabao based on the canvassing of votes at the municipal level. But the results were reversed during the canvassing in Ilagan, the capital of Isabela, where Dy himself and police and 5th ID troops stood watch and forbade the public, including poll watchers and Abaya's lawyers, from witnessing the counting.

Not content with this, on May 15, Dy's henchmen killed Engr. Joaquin Soriano, Abaya's campaign manager and Bayan Muna municipal coordinator in Jones, for refusing to support Aggabao. Dy's camp even brazenly spread intrigues against the New People's Army and made it appear that it was the latter that killed Soriano. Dy's men sent Bombo Radyo DZNC a fake statement by Ka Delio Baladon, spokes-



person of the Benito Tesorio Command of the NPA in southern Isabela, purportedly admitting Soriano's killing. The people at Bombo Radyo, however, immediately noticed the falsity of the statement and confirmed that it was the military that sent it.

The following day, a motorcade was launched that wound through nearly all the towns of the fourth district to assail the fraud that transpired and the murder of Soriano. Several hundred vehicles and thousands of people joined the motorcade, including members of Bayan Muna, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and other progressive organizations. Peasants, youth, church people, professionals and anti-Dy politicians, among others, issued statements and joined the protest actions.

On May 24, a motorcade was launched anew and joined by thousands of people. More than a thousand people later attended Soriano's burial, where various spokespersons denounced the Dy clique. The program culminated with the reading of the Benito Tesorio Command's tribute to Soriano.

Such strong censure of the Dy dynasty never before seen in southern Isabela is sure to intensify as the 2004 elections draw near and the Cojuangco-Dy cabal resorts to even filthier political maneuvers.

## 41st IB attempts murder of peasant leaders in Cagayan

ELEMENTS of the 41st IB attempted to kill a number of peasant leaders in Baggao, Cagayan on July 1. Soldiers hacked Benito Abarientos, Isabelo Adviento, Ronald Reyes and Joey Javier right in front of the RSOT/41st IB camp. Javier's arm was nearly severed and he sustained many blows in various parts of his body. Adviento and Reyes were able to run and seek help from the people to bring Javier to a hospital. Javier is the chairperson of CAGUIMUNGAN, a progressive alliance of peasants in the province.

The 41st IB has attempted several times to stifle the peasants' militancy and mass actions in Cagayan by unleashing intense repression and violence.

In the face of the intense militarization of their town, the peasants of Baggao continue to have a brilliant record in militantly upholding their rights, successfully attaining benefits and improving their social welfare.

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# Arroyo-Cojuangco conflict intensifies

**T**his July, the Sandiganbayan declared that the coco levy funds, most of which are deposited at the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB), are public in nature. It is these funds that were used by Eduardo “Danding” Cojuangco to purchase 27% of shares in San Miguel Corporation (SMC) under UCPB’s name and were also likely used to purchase an additional 20% directly in his name. The court’s decision renders illegal Cojuangco’s basis for controlling the UCPB shares, which are the biggest in SMC.

If the decision were to be enforced, representatives of the Arroyo government would replace Cojuangco’s representatives in the SMC’s Board of Directors. The government would then have the right to appoint a new SMC chairman and Arroyo’s camp would then control the Philippines’ largest and most profitable enterprise.

Cojuangco, however, retains his chairmanship and decisive control over SMC up to February 2004 according to a “temporary agreement” between himself and the Presidential Commission on Good Government. Thus, his control over SMC and other companies acquired through the coco levy funds will be put on the auction block in the forthcoming presidential elections. It is these companies that will serve as the top prize, together with the coco levy funds and Cojuangco’s other ill-gotten wealth, for whoever wins in 2004.

Consequently, the forthcoming election is sure to be violent and fraud-ridden. This early, Cojuangco has warned that he will go all-out in opposing any attempt to deprive him of control over SMC and his other ill-gotten wealth.

The early exposure of the collusion between Arroyo and Cojuangco and the severe criticism and strong opposition this has reaped from militant forces, other critics and the people have led to the collapse of a series of negotiations between them regarding the coco levy. One by one, their secret ag-

reements to keep the coco levy funds private and their collusion to divide among themselves the UCPB, SMC and other big businesses affiliated with the latter have failed.

Arroyo had pinned her hopes on forming a coalition with Cojuangco and receiving financial support from him as well as on his decision not to run himself or to support any other candidate. But with the breakup of their opportunist coalition, Arroyo’s already feeble election machinery will further weaken and her already slim chances of winning in the coming election will further diminish.

We can expect Cojuangco to take steps to unify and strengthen the opposition to support his own candidacy or that of anyone else he chooses to support in the coming polls. Cojuangco, however, eagerly wants Arroyo to be the ruling faction’s bet because she would be the easiest to beat by any opposition candidate. In the face of all this, events will push Arroyo to resort to even more desperate measures consequent to her determined ambition to remain in power.

The intensified struggle for the coco levy is the culmination of years of contention among principal bureaucrat capitalists over funds they do not even own. In this contest’s many twists and turns, not once did these greedy bureaucrats salivating over the coco levy have as their principal agenda the interests and welfare of those who right-



fully own the funds—namely, the millions of coconut farmers who, for more than 17 years, were forced to pay these taxes.

This is a reflection of the further corruption of the reactionary ruling classes. It highlights the bureaucrat-capitalist character of both the biggest assets and the source of the biggest comprador properties in the Philippines. So evident is the very crucial role played by bureaucratic control and the consequent ability to commit large-scale plunder of public funds in the efforts by any ruling clique from the ruling classes to further enrich itself and enhance its business interests. There is intense collusion and struggle among big bureaucrat capitalists to wrest control of the bureaucracy and public funds, scramble avariciously over the spoils, and above all, seize resources from the people and deprive those who are most impoverished and in dire need of livelihood and social services. The ruling factions’ mad, greedy scramble is sure to further intensify as the available wealth they can divide among themselves further diminishes.

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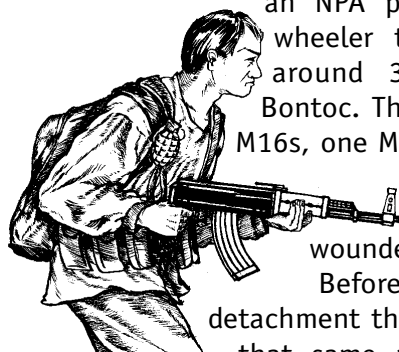




## 19 firearms seized in 2 offensives in Bontoc

Nineteen high-powered rifles and other military equipment were confiscated by fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) Leonardo Pacsi Command in two successive tactical offensives this July 15 in Bontoc, Mountain Province.

Troops of the 71st IB were on their way back to their headquarters in Fort Magsaysay in Laur, Nueva Ecija when an NPA platoon ambushed the six-wheeler truck they were riding at around 3 p.m. in Sitio Talubin, Bontoc. The Red fighters seized seven M16s, one M14 and a .45. Eight soldiers were killed in the firefight, while one was seriously wounded.



Before this, the NPA attacked the detachment the 54th IB in Talubin Proper that same morning. The Red fighters took control of the detachment and burned it down. They seized five M14s, five garands, a carbine and ammunition. Two soldiers were killed and two others were wounded.

Meanwhile, according to latest reports, nine soldiers were killed in fighting between the NPA and the AFP on July 5 in East Maguisguis, Botolan, Zambales. Earlier reports placed enemy casualties at five wounded.

## PNP in Catbalogan ambushed; 2 firearms seized

An M16 and a 9 mm were confiscated and one policeman wounded when the NPA ambushed the vehicle ridden by PNP Samar chief P/Supt. Conrado Calvario. The police were headed for Tacloban City to welcome Pres. Gloria Arroyo when a bomb was detonated on the patrol car they were riding along the highway in Barangay Socorro, Catbalogan.

## Soldiers, police ambushed in Abra

A squad from the NPA Agustin Begnalen Command in Abra ambushed combined elements of the 17th IB and PNP on May 16 in Barangay Lingas, Lagangilang, Abra. Two soldiers were killed and four wounded in the ambush. The NPA was able to retreat safely, while the surprised enemy was not even able to launch pursuit operations.

To cover up for their embarrassment, the 17th IB merely spread intrigues against the NPA. They staged the surrender of two men who had already left the NPA ten years ago and also revived claims that the NPA was recruiting minors. (From Dangadang, revolutionary paper in the Ilocos-Cordillera region)

AB



## Establishing a MAKIBAKA chapter in a barrio in Bicol



*A number of full-fledged mass organizations has been established in a province in Bicol, proving the revolution's all-sided advance in the province. In June, a comrade from AB was witness to the formation of a chapter of the Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA) in one of the province's barrios.*

The MAKIBAKA had long been organized in this barrio after the formation of the Pam-bansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) in the area the previous year. But it was reorganized this June because women members of PKM were not included in its membership the first time around. Women from all of the barrio's sitios held a conference to reestablish the MAKIBAKA chapter.

With the help of the NPA and the Local Party Branch (LPB), preparing the requisites for establishing the MAKIBAKA chapter became easy. On June 15, they gathered the members' written biographies that had missing or vague information to put them in order. At the same time, they prepared the necessary data about the barrio's revolutionary history.

Subsequently, the comrades assigned to prepare the requisites held a meeting. They divided among themselves the tasks of putting in order the drafts of the MAKIBAKA chapter's one-year program, the barrio's revolutionary history and the members' biographies.



They also met with a number of comrades from the people's army and the LPB's Executive Committee to help prepare the other requisites, including appointing persons who could oversee the technical needs of the conference such as procuring kitchen utensils and preparing food as well as maintaining security.

The conference to reestablish the MAKIBAKA chapter took place on June 18. Of the 68 targeted women members, 42 attended. But the conference coincided with a parents' meeting in a nearby school. After the women explained matters to the teachers, however, the school postponed its scheduled meeting.

During the conference, the assembly gave a vigorous round of applause to the local PKM chapter chair's speech on the importance of setting up mass organizations and striving to raise the people's level of unity in the barrio step-by-step. After this, an NPA commander recounted the barrio's history.

To enable all members of the chapter to get to know each other, their biographies were read at the conference.

It was in the afternoon when the draft of the chapter's one-year program was discussed and presented for commentaries and suggestions from the membership before approval. The highlights of the program included, among others, the establishment of a corps of political instructors, provisions for MAKIBAKA members to join the barrio defense group and the launching of finance projects.

After this, the meeting elected 16 of the ablest and most active in the organization as members of the Chapter Committee. From the 16, the chairperson and vice-chairperson for organization; education; finance and economy; health; and defense were elected.

Everyone was in high spirits during the day of establishment, with all of them feeling the strong bond between the women and the people's army. After the day-long conference, they sang *Awit ng Pag-asa* (Song of Hope), the comrades' favorite song sung during conferences to establish mass organizations:

*"...Dahil mithi nati'y palayain,  
Bawat isa sa pagkaalipin,  
Sa gitna man ng gutom, kahirapa't pasakit  
Hinding-hindi tayo susuko..."*

("....Because we aim to free  
Each one from slavery,  
Even in the midst of hunger, poverty and suffering  
Never will we surrender....")

AB

## The fight against illegal drugs in Eastern Visayas



**"T**hat's just a way for Gloria to deodorize herself. The small drug pushers will be hit, but because it is the reactionary government itself and its armed forces that are behind the country's drug problem, it will not be resolved." This was the reaction of Ka Peping, a leading Party cadre who has long been working in the revolutionary movement in Samar.

As far as public clamor and the statements of radio commentators are concerned, they say only one thing: They do not have any hope that the AFP or the PNP will be able to resolve the drug problem because the latter are themselves implicated in it and are in fact, behind the drug syndicates. Only the NPA can resolve it.

In truth, in any part of the region where the people's Red political power prevails, the drug problem has either been already annihilated or has not had a chance to gain momentum. Should there be some cases discovered, they are quickly dealt with through decisive measures taken by the revolutionary mass organizations and if necessary, by the people's army.

According to Ka Peping, one of the first steps taken with the entry of the revolutionary movement into any area is to ascertain who the bad elements are in the community. They include, among others,



those involved in antisocial or criminal activities such as robbery, carabao rustling, prostitution and illegal drug pushing.

The principal means of dealing with ordinary people involved in these activities is political: we patiently explain the revolution's good objectives and the importance of uniting the people against their true enemies. We also explain to them that involvement in criminal and antisocial activities undermines revolutionary unity and is destructive to the people's welfare. In the case of illegal drugs, we explain their harmful effects on health.

These initial measures alone, said Ka Peping, yield dramatic results. "As soon as drug pushers hear about the NPA's presence in a barrio, there is an automatic and significant reduction in their number and activities."

As political work further develops in a barrio, the mass organizations themselves play an expanding role in ensuring that their place stays free of illegal drugs.

Whenever they hear about persons pushing drugs, says Ka Peping, the mass organizations confront them and explain matters to them so they'd stop. "Usually," he says, "we are able to convince them to stop." If they have deeper problems, we help in resolving them. The officials of the organization continue to investigate and monitor whether or not the concerned individuals have indeed reformed.

But if they refuse to stop despite repeated dialogues, the problem is referred to the NPA. And more often than not, the warning given to them by the NPA is what makes them stop pushing drugs.

Ordinary people using drugs are patiently and tirelessly convinced, encouraged and helped. Because

the youth are the most vulnerable to drugs, the key to ensuring that they are not victimized by drugs is to arouse, organize and mobilize them for the revolution. "In consolidated barrios or those undergoing consolidation," said Ka Peping, "almost all of the youth organization's time is directed at political and ideological studies, propagating patriotic and progressive culture, organizing and production work. They neither have the time nor the interest to engage in rotten and decadent activities."

As the revolution grows deeper roots in an area, the organized youth tend towards working full-time for the revolution. "In the countryside," says Ka Peping, "there has been a gradual reversal of the previously strong inclination of Samareño youth to abandon their barrios to work in Manila. They are now more inclined to join or work 'full-time' in the people's army."

The mass organizations in the barrios propagate "Kampanyang Salinlahi" (New generation campaign) which calls for each family to contribute at least a son or a daughter to the revolution so that the movement will be infused with new blood and aging comrades or those slain in struggle can have replacements. "It is the parents themselves who encourage their children to work full-time in the people's army," explains Ka Peping. "The revolution has become part of the daily life of the barrio and the dream of every youth is to join the people's army and serve the revolution. How could the youth even think of using drugs under these conditions?"

The situation in the town centers and other areas not yet reached by the movement, or even in barrios long left behind by the

NPA, however, is still quite different. In one barrio in Northern Samar that the NPA had to leave behind and where the AFP set up a detachment in the early 1990s, the military itself pushed drugs to corrupt the people and destroy the revolutionary mass base. For four years, the military inveigled identified members of the youth and women's organizations into using shabu. This only stopped when the people successfully expelled the detachment from the barrio.

In Catarman, capital of Northern Samar, it is the chief himself of the PNP's anti-drugs operations unit, SP03 Vic Delfin, who sells shabu even to the police. "He is also a rabid counterrevolutionary and leader of a holdup syndicate based in Manila," says Ka Peping.

In San Juan, San Isidro, Northern Samar, the masses reported that the commander of the AFP patrol base himself ordered shabu from another barrio when his unit's supply ran out.

In Allen, Northern Samar, the shabu supplier is PNP Maj. Andy Suan, presently assigned in Manila. He is known to be close to Panfilo Lacson.

In Guian, Eastern Samar, the mayor himself serves as the drug lord. Using his earnings from drugs, this mayor plans to run as a candidate for congress or for the governorship in 2004.

In February 2002, the NPA Mt. Amandewin Command in Leyte punished Inaki Guljuran, one of the biggest drug lords in Ormoc City and nearby towns, in response to the people's firm demand.

"We know each and every one of the principal drug pushers in the region," says Ka Peping, "and we are warning them to put a stop to their criminal activities." AB



## The AFP and PNP are the country's biggest drug syndicates

Arroyo's showcase war against illegal drugs is bound to fail because the AFP and PNP themselves are the country's biggest drug syndicates.

In a statement issued July 9, the New People's Army Chadli Molintas Command in Ilocos-Cordillera strongly denounced the orchestrated smear campaign of Arroyo and the AFP and PNP depicting the NPA as marijuana cultivators. It is merely an attempt by Arroyo and the AFP-PNP to cover up the latter's own involvement in drug syndicates.

The CMC said that in the countryside, the marijuana plantations in Benguet were initiated by Brig. Gen. Reynaldo Acop, former chief of the PNP Cordillera Regional Command, and carried on by his successors. In Kalinga, it is the Cordillera People's Liberation Army, the paramilitary force that has formally merged with the AFP, which maintains the plantations. This is an open secret and can be verified by the masses in these areas, said the CMC.

At the national level, no less than the Presidential Task Force on Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence has reported that thousands of AFP and PNP forces are members of 507 drug

syndicates and that their military officials earn P50 billion annually from the sale of confiscated drugs and from protection money collected from these drug syndicates. Aside from jueteng, the illegal drug trade is the leading source of AFP and PNP generals' unexplained wealth.

The CMC said that the NPA does not cultivate marijuana. It cultivates revolutionary consciousness and the militant assertion of democratic rights among the people. "The NPA is a disciplined army. It deplores and denounces bourgeois decadence, including drug abuse, gambling, prostitution, and other anti-social activities which are endemic to corrupt social systems such as capitalism and semifeudal societies like the Philippines."

The CMC also said that in areas where the NPA encounters peasants who cultivate marijuana, a vigorous campaign is waged to discourage the practice. The peasants are taught that revolution, not marijuana planting, is the solution to poverty and oppression. The revolutionary movement also launches revolutionary land reform and various socio-economic programs so that the peasants are provided with alternative sources of livelihood. AB

### 3 RHB elements tried by people's court

An NPA unit arrested three elements of the "Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan" or RHB on the night of June 11 in Sitio Kabukiran, Barangay Kalaylayan, Abucay, Bataan. Arrested were Dony Valencia alias Relly, 24, of Barangay Wawa; Edwin Egay alias Lester, 19, of Barangay Gabon; and Dindo Diaz, 23, of Barangay Salian. Seized from them were a .45, a 9 mm, a .38 and two cellphones.

The comrades treated the three captives well while they were under investigation and trial. They were also taken out of harm's way when the NPA custodial unit was involved in an encounter on June 14.

After hearing the cases filed against them, the court determined that there was insufficient basis to punish Egay and Diaz. The two were freed and entrusted in the care of Egay's father. Valencia,

however, was meted the death sentence after the court confirmed his involvement in six cases of murder.

Among those he had killed were Jimmy Sangalang of Wawa, Abucay and Anu of Mabatang, Abucay. The comrades immediately informed his parents of the court's decision and where his body could be recovered. AB

*(From Himagsik, revolutionary paper of Central Luzon)*



# Bishop of the poor

About 30,000 people accompanied Bishop Antonio Fortich to his final resting place in San Sebastian Cathedral in Bacolod City on July 16.

They led the bishop's remains on a procession at the city plaza at around 9 a.m. Among those who attended were various militant organizations led by Bayan Muna.

At around 9:30 a.m., the mass began in which a tribute by Pope John Paul II to the man endearingly called the Bishop of the Poor was read. The Catholic church leader paid tribute to "the diligent leadership of Fortich as the Bishop of the Diocese of Bacolod and his active concern for the dignity and rights of the poor."

Before the day of his burial, Bishop Fortich also received tributes from various revolutionary leaders and organizations.

On July 4, he was honored by former NDF spokesperson Frank Fernandez. As proof of Bishop Fortich's greatness even during the dark period of martial law, said Fernandez, he did not surrender his principles in the face of pressure from Marcos and his local henchman Roberto Benedicto. Under the bishop's leadership, church people continued to link arms with revolutionaries and progressive forces until the downfall of the fascist regime.

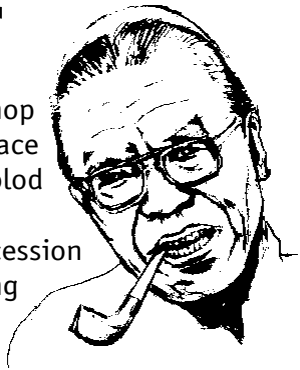
On July 15, Communist Party of the Philippines spokesman Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal hailed Bishop Fortich, citing the bishop's militant upholding of civil liberties and his participation in the people's struggles against fascism and feudal exploitation.

"He intensely detested and condemned the unjust condition of a society divided, on the one hand, into a few who composed the ruling classes who indulged in their excessive wealth derived merely from greedy exploitation and plunder and, on the other hand, the greater number who suffered severe hunger, were in abject slavery and oppressed," said Ka Roger.

Ka Luis Jalandoni and Ka Coni Ledesma of the National Democratic Front also issued a statement of sincere condolence on July 10 over the passing of Bishop Fortich. "For all of us and for generations to come who will carry forward Monsignor Fortich's high ideals of social justice, genuine land reform, enduring peace based on justice and his commitment to uphold the dignity and freedom of the struggling people, we will feel his presence, his strength and his enduring inspiration."

The revolutionary Christians for National Liberation (CNL) also offered a tribute to the departed bishop on July 13. To the CNL, the exemplary life of Bishop Fortich was a timeless inspiration and a challenge for all Christians to embrace the cause of the oppressed and exploited classes.

"In the face of brutal state fascism, feudal oppression and imperialist domination in Negros and the whole country, his life as a revolutionary Christian who faithfully prayed, spoke and acted for the fundamental rights and interests of the poor is a precious contribution for the advancement of the people's revolutionary struggle," added the CNL.



# AFP junior officers and rank-and-file restive

Discrimination against junior officers and ordinary soldiers, low salaries, corruption and other unsavory practices of the AFP leadership are behind the recent unrest within the military organization. The contents of a manifesto released this June by the newly formed Concerned Army Officers of Sulu, representing "thousands of ordinary soldiers in the battlefield," reflect such restiveness.

Their demands are nearly identical with those aired by the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) and the Young Officers' Union (YOU) in the early 1980s. This proves that there has been no change since then with regards to corruption and the unscrupulous practices of high military officials. They have in fact worsened.

Such restiveness has reached a point where disgruntled officers and soldiers were rumored to be planning a coup d'état. Instead of addressing their demands, however, the DND has challenged the junior officers and soldiers to reveal their identities, warning them against launching a coup against the Arroyo government.

The Communist Party of the Philippines has expressed sympathy for the AFP junior officers and rank-and-file. In a statement, CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said that DND and AFP leaders enjoyed large salaries, luxuries and special privileges, and amass great wealth from skimming off funds meant for the rank-and-file and for disaster relief, receiving kickbacks

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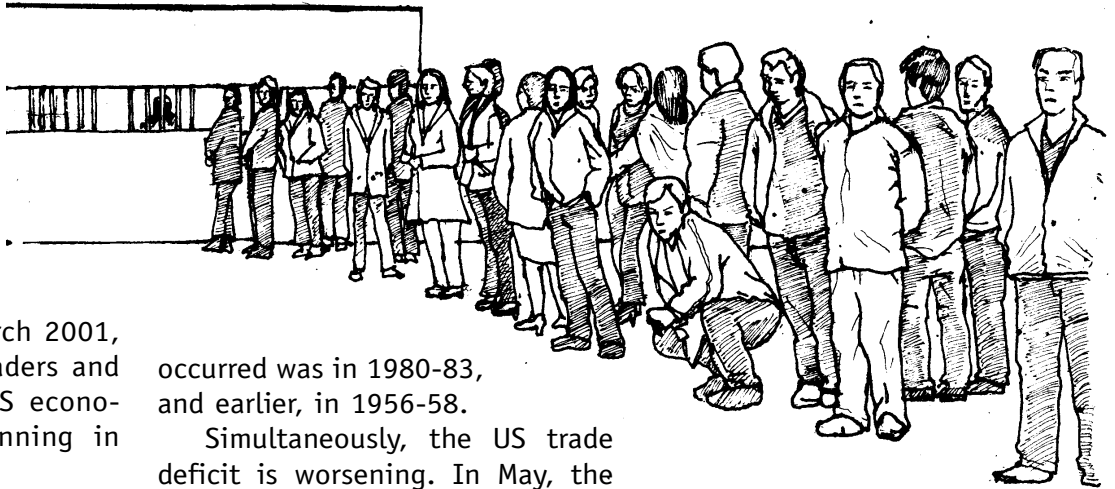


# The worsening US economy

**T**he unemployment rate in the US grew by 6.4% this June, the highest in nine months. This indicates that the present recession be-setting the imperialist economy has not abated since it began in March 2001, dashing hopes by US leaders and businessmen that the US economy would recover beginning in 2003.

Almost 9.4 million American workers are now out of work. Up to 2.7 million of them lost their jobs since George W. Bush became president at the beginning of 2001. In the last three months—from March to June—almost a million workers were laid off from their jobs.

Most of those who lost their jobs are from the manufacturing sector—a reflection of the country's declining industrial production. In truth, US factories are only operating at 74.3% capacity, the lowest in the last 19 years. There have likewise been massive layoffs in airline companies and corporations of the "new economy" such as telecommunications and internet companies. The last time that job losses on this scale



occurred was in 1980-83, and earlier, in 1956-58.

Simultaneously, the US trade deficit is worsening. In May, the balance of trade deficit came to \$418 billion as a result of weaker exports and the growing costs of oil imports.

The Bush regime's economic policies are also resulting in an ever-growing national budgetary deficit. The Bush regime squandered the \$334 billion surplus it had inherited at the beginning of its term and within three years netted a deficit of \$455 billion—which means a deficit of \$789 billion in absolute terms. Even the net deficit of \$455 billion is already the biggest in the US' entire history.

This worsening deficit is caused by the US' unbridled military spending and military adventurism and its maintenance of

occupation troops in Iraq and, previous to this, in Afghanistan. It is likewise traceable to its preferential treatment of the largest US companies to which it has granted tax breaks, and massive layoffs of workers as well as the withdrawal of subsidies for the poor that have resulted in a shrinkage of the market and a narrower taxpayer base.

Estimates for this year alone put the amount spent for the attack and conquest of Iraq at up to \$48 billion, in addition to \$5 billion per month spent for the continued US occupation of the two countries. Meanwhile, the tax breaks and tax exemptions granted by Bush to large companies come to as much as \$330 billion. AB

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from contracts and earnings from criminal syndicates such as those involved in drugs, kidnapping for ransom, bank robberies and other criminal activities. On the other hand, junior officers and ordinary soldiers are merely used as cannon fodder.

Worse, according to Ka Roger, they are being ruthlessly used to destroy homes, steal farm animals, ruin crops, kill and maim the innocent and trample on the

human rights of ordinary folk.

Ka Roger challenged them to uphold the patriotic and democratic aspirations of the Filipino people, turn their backs completely on the reactionary, rotten and losing course of the AFP, and join and support the revolutionary movement. In particular, Ka Roger called on them to follow the example of Lt. Crispin Tagamolila, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy who joined the New People's Army. AB

## Indemnification of Marcos dictatorship victims pressed

THE Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainee Laban sa Detensyon at Para sa Amnestiya (SELDA) is pressing for the approval of House Bill 4535 which sets aside one-third of all of the Marcoses' ill-gotten wealth for the 10,000 victims of martial law after the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the government this July regarding the disposition of \$150 million in ill-gotten Marcos wealth long held in escrow at the Philippine National Bank.

SELDA issued the call amid maneuverings by the Marcos family and their cronies to block or water down any law that provides a significant portion of the ill-gotten wealth to victims of the dictatorship.

Recently, Arroyo also announced the allotment of a mere P8 million (\$150,000) to the victims—a far cry from the P2.5 billion which should have been awarded to them from the \$150 million.

## GRP withdraws conditions imposed on MILF

THE Arroyo regime yielded on July 18 to MILF demands by suspending the arrest warrants and rewards for the capture of 10 MILF leaders, and halting the "terrorist" tag on the MILF. Several sectors including many imam (religious Muslim leaders) likewise forwarded the demands to pave the way for peace negotiations between the government and the MILF.

In a related development, Party spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal advised the MILF to be wary of the puppet government's deceptive schemes and to be vigilant regarding the US' current intervention in the peace negotiations.

Meanwhile, the AFP immediately violated its ceasefire with the MILF when its soldiers assaulted an MILF stronghold in Pagalungan, Maguindanao.

## Violent dispersal of Iloilo rally condemned

MILITANT organizations and human rights advocates assailed the violent dispersal by police and vigilantes of 200 rallyists in front of the Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel where President Arroyo stayed during her stopover in Iloilo City on July 15.

More than 200 police and vigilante forces under the Civilian Volunteer Organization and the Bantay Bayan Foundation carried out the dispersal, which was the most violent in recent years. The rallyists included members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Panay, Kilusang Mayo Uno, KADAMAY, Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide, Anakpawis, Anakbayan and other militant organizations in Iloilo.

Six demonstrators were injured and ten were jailed.

## "Open skies" policy soon to be implemented in the country

NEGOTIATIONS between the US and the Philippines on the postponement anew of the fullblown implementation of the "open skies" policy have broken down, paving the way for the policy's enforcement on October 1. The implementation of the agreement, which was signed way back in 1982 by the Marcos regime upon the dictates of US imperialism, has already been postponed three times.

The "open skies" policy not only covers the liberalization of flights between the US and the Philippines and between the Philippines and other countries, but also trips to and from various points of the Philippines.

The US is demanding that US airlines be allowed to do business in the Philippines as though they were in US territory—in violation of the Philippine constitution. It is now using this issue as a pretext for demanding immediate charter change to do away with obstacles to the imperialist trampling of the Philippines' patrimony and national sovereignty.

The "open skies" policy will eventually result in the bankruptcy of local airline companies such as Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific Airways.